

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 091140Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3366
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, PINS, CSCE, SHUM, CZ, US
SUBJECT: CZECHS STEP UP PETTY HARASSMENT OF EMBASSY

REFS A. PRAGUE 2163, B. PRAGUE 2170

1. SUMMARY: DESPITE RELATIVELY UPBEAT APPROACH TO BILATERAL
RELATIONS ASSUMED BY CZECHOSLOVAK FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS IN
RECENT WEEKS, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT A PATTERN OF ACTIONS DIRECTED AT

EMBASSY EMPLOYEES AND OTHER AMERICANS HERE--BOTH OFFICIALLY AND
UNOFFICIALLY--INDICATES THAT PARTY WATCHDOGS ARE FUNCTIONING WITH A
HOSTILITY SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH HAS CHARACTERIZED RECENT PRESS
COVERAGE (REF A).

END SUMMARY.

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2. DETENTION OF EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEE. JIRI FRANTAL, EMBASSY'S
SENIOR CZECHOSLOVAK COMMERCIAL SPECIALIST, WAS DETAINED FOR THREE
HOURS AT CZECH-AUSTRIAN BORDER AUGUST 3 WHEN, FULLY DOCUMENTED, HE
ATTEMPTED TO TRAVEL TO VIENNA TO HELP WITH PREPARATIONS FOR U.S.
EXHIBIT AT BRNO FAIR. BORDER AUTHORITIES WOULD GIVE NO EXPLANATION OF

REFUSAL TO LET FRANTAL PASS, KEPT HIS PASSPORT AND OTHER PAPERS, AND TOLD HIM TO RETURN TO PRAGUE, WHERE, AGAIN WITHOUT EXPLANATION--AND AFTER A TWO-HOUR WAIT--HE WAS INFORMED THAT HIS TRIP WAS "NOT IN THE INTEREST OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK STATE." HIS PASSPORT HAS NOT YET BEEN RETURNED TO HIM.

3. TWO AMERICAN STAFF EMPLOYEES OF EMBASSY HAVE BEEN STOPPED WHILE DRIVING TO PRAGUE FROM GERMANY RECENTLY. IN BOTH CASES ONLY CARS OF RESIDENT FOREIGNERS (CLEARLY IDENTIFIABLE BY VIRTUE OF YELLOW LICENSE PLATES) WERE BEING FLAGGED DOWN, AND POLICE BEHAVED IN SURLY MANNER, DEMANDING PAYMENT OF FINES ON TRUMPED - UP CHARGE OF SPEEDING. EMPLOYEES WERE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE THEIR JOURNEY AFTER BRIEF DELAYS.

4. ATTEMPTS AT RECRUITMENT. THERE HAVE BEEN AT LEAST TWO POSSIBLY THREE, REPORTED INSTANCES OF ATTEMPTS BY BLOC INTELLIGENCE TO RECRUIT FOREIGN-BORN AMERICAN CITIZENS WHILE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA. THE FIRST WE REPORTED TO EUR/EE IN MAY BY MEMORANDUM DATED MAY 27. THE SECOND OCCURRED LAST WEEK, AND INVOLVED ATTEMPT TO RECRUIT RUSSIAN-BORN EMPLOYEE OF GLASS INDUSTRIES (SIC) OF NEW YORK, WHO WAS SO FRIGHTENED BY GOONS' TECHNIQUES THAT HE AND HIS WIFE SOUGHT REFUGE IN EMBASSY NIGHT OF AUGUST 3-4.

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5. FULBRIGHT PROGRAM. AS NOTED REF B, EMBASSY HAS BEEN INFORMED OF BELATED DECISION TO CANCEL APPOINTMENT OF AMERICAN LITERATURE PROFESSOR DONALD KARTIGANER TO TRADITIONAL CHARLES UNIVERSITY LECTURESHIP UNDER FULBRIGHT PROGRAM--THIS DESPITE OUR POINTING OUT THAT CZECHOSLOVAK-DRAFTED IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM OF NEWLY-NEGOTIATED EXCHANGES AGREEMENT MAKES PROVISION FOR FULBRIGHT LECTURER IN THIS FIELD.

6. COMMENT: WHILE IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT DETENTION OF LOCAL EMPLOYEE FRANTAL AT BORDER AND STOPPING OF AMERICAN EMBASSY EMPLOYEES ON TRUMPED-UP CHARGES WERE VIRTUALLY ROUTINE EVENTS IN THIS COUNTRY, CURTAILMENT OF LONG-STANDING FULBRIGHT LECTURESHIP IN AMERICAN LITERATURE, AT GREAT INCONVENIENCE TO PROFESSOR WHO NOW MUST MAKE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMING ACADEMIC YEAR, IS A NEW MOVE TO REDUCE FURTHER U.S. ABILITY TO REACH NON-OFFICIAL CZECHS. THE CURRENT PATTERN HERE OF SEEMINGLY DELIBERATE TROUBLEMAKING AIMED AT THIS EMBASSY BODES POORLY FOR THE EXCHANGES AGREEMENT, IN PARTICULAR, AND US-GOC BILATERAL RELATIONS IN GENERAL. WE BELIEVE MUCH OF THIS DIFFICULTY SHOULD BE VIEWED AS FALL-OUT FROM CURRENT US-SOVIET STRAINS. FROWICK

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